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ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

Statement of the IDB Governor for the State of Palestine

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Original Text
(Arabic)

In the Name of Allah the Most Compassionate Most Merciful

**Excellencies,
Excellency Dr Bandar Hajjar, President of the IDB Group,**

Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu,

I would like to express my deepest thanks and appreciation, on behalf of Palestine and myself, to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, to his wise Government, and to the staff of the IDB for the facilities and the warm welcome extended to us. We are pleased in this meeting to see the imprint of H.E. the President of the Bank which gives a new personality to our institution and turns it from a development bank into a development and development agents' bank, from a centralized institution to a decentralized one, to eliminate bottlenecks and delegate powers and to facilitate implementation on the ground.

Projects pass through several stages, from a pledge to commitment to disbursement. The real criterion is disbursement because it is linked to implementation. For all these reasons, your decision to restructure the bank and serve the new orientation with absolute transparency removes all opacity. We do hereby congratulate you for developing this institution to facilitate accomplishments.

To complete the efforts you have expended, I believe that the Bank is working in a global environment full of challenges, rapid changes, contradictions, and doubts, which will increase in the future. Therefore, old development models based on aid alone have now become ineffective and do not help to face the future.

Mr. President,

There is no expressway or roadmap to progress. There is a need for multiple and diversified pathways for change, to enable adjustment and responsiveness to context, needs, and priorities, which can be supported in new ways of thinking, effort, and cooperation.

I call on the Bank to stand out and establish networks with partners other than the conventional ones, to combine the vision that focuses on the grassroots based on the priorities of the most deprived segments of society, international participation at high levels, the capacity to establish exchange networks between people and institutions around the world, the preservation of flexibility and decentralization, so as to be capable of responding and completing projects. Structural changes at the Bank and in its working processes will help us face the challenges and turn ideas into viable projects.

I believe that the distinctiveness I call on the Bank to adopt relies on many pillars, in particular, implementing projects of high quality, which have an impact on various socio-economic sectors; involving stakeholders in selecting them; and building international partnerships relying on cooperation to produce the desired effect of these projects.

Our strategic goals include:

1. Reducing poverty and inequality, accelerating sustainability; building a safe and inclusive society;
2. Building an early-warning system to face the crises that may wreak havoc on some member countries;
3. Strengthening the Bank's capacity to carry out high quality projects in various social and material infrastructures;
4. Achieving interactivity between theoretical development frameworks, policies, and projects that reflect these frameworks;
5. Establishing institutional and social networking to draw a true image on Islam. In this respect, educational and learning programs should become a comprehensive strategy that uses modern technology. Instead of being a one-way process, the transfer of knowledge should become an interactive one;
6. Commitment to projects, policies, and activities that support distinctiveness and comfort for the Bank's personnel;
7. There is a need to empower women, enhance their economic status in the societies of member countries to help families turn from consumer units into productive ones;
8. Turning gradual change into surgical change that removes scourges and restructures institutions and the rules that govern them.

Regarding Palestine, Mr. President, we have suffered over the last ten years as a result of division. We signed several reconciliation agreements, but none of them has been implemented. We will keep on trying because we have no other alternatives other than reconciliation and returning the Gaza Strip into the bosom of Palestinian legitimacy ten years after the coup. During these years, we have made every possible effort and signed the first and the second Cairo Agreements, the Doha Agreement, in the presence of His Highness the Emir. However, these agreements have not been implemented so far.

The people of Gaza are our people. We will keep on making every possible effort to support them in order to achieve Palestinian national unity and end this black chapter of the history of Palestine, called the coup and schism chapter.

Israel wants the division to persist. The Palestinian people's division is in the interest of Israeli colonization. The status quo is in their favour: Gaza abducted, and the West Bank occupied. We are making every effort to break the deadlock, in Gaza with Hamas, and in the West Bank with the occupier.

Continuing division has impacted the reconstruction process in the Gaza Strip; it is slow and only 40% of the financial pledges have been disbursed. Gaza is still experiencing miserable conditions in terms of water and electricity supply, job opportunities, especially youth employment. On top of that, the joblessness rate among young people in the Palestinian territories in the age group 19-29 has reached 56%. This situation may have dire social, economic, and political consequences.

Israel is trying to block and confiscate production means, especially land and water in order to expand its settlement program, which aims to torpedo the possibility of creating an independent Palestinian State. The blockade imposed on the city of Al-Qods and the stifling of its economic means, as well as repeated incursions into the Al-Aqsa mosque aim to complete the judaization of Al-Qods.

In this regard, we would like to express our thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, and His Majesty King Abdullah II, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and all the Arabs and Muslims who mobilized their efforts with President Abu Mazen to signal to the new US Administration the gravity of transferring the seat of the US embassy to Al-Qods, hoping and working to prevent this move from being completed. The city of Al-Qods is suffering from very difficult conditions and needs our every effort and support. We thank the Islamic Development Bank for everything it has provided to this city, but we need to mobilize funds to support the steadfastness of its inhabitants to keep it Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic, with a civilizational and human dimension, to remain a city open for the worship of God.

Through the funding of the Al-Aqsa and Al-Qods Fund, the Bank is also providing assistance through Arab and Islamic Funds - that we thank - for several development areas in Palestine. We call for wider coordination and a review of the operation of these funds to reinvigorate their role and mobilize additional funds in light of the Arab and Islamic Summits' decisions.

The Islamic Development Bank, while revising its operational mechanisms and structures, is called upon to include in this process the Palestine department in order to assess performance and study the impact so as to mobilize additional funds from States, and from the Arab and Islamic private sector.

I have taken part in the meeting of the Union of Arab Banks, which includes 650 Arab banks and deposits worth 3 trillion dollars. We asked them to set up an investment fund in Palestine on a profit basis. We would like to thank them, as their board has approved the idea, which is now in the process of concretization. The IDB could be one of the most significant partners in this project.

**Excellency the President,
Distinguished Guests,**

Israel is trying to involve us in a regional process and to circumvent the Arab initiative, which calls for ending the occupation of our land in return for normalizing relations between the Arab States and Israel, by reversing the equation. Instead of implementing the Arab Peace Initiative from A to Z, Israel wants to start from Z to A. In other words, it wants to establish relations with the States of the region first without paying the political price, which is the ending of the occupation. It also tries to push for the so-called "economic peace" under the assumption and allegation that the peace process is stalled and has reached a dead-end. In doing so, it tries to use a smokescreen as though the Palestinian citizen wants subsistence only. Of course, subsistence, jobs, self-development, and the economy are important for us, and are levers for our struggle, for policy and steadfastness on our land. This is what the donors - Arab, international, and Islamic institutions - are giving us. From this stage, we say to Israel what Prophet Aissa - may Allah bless him - said, "Bread alone is not sufficient for man's life." We seek freedom, dignity, the end to

occupation, and the establishment of our State with Al-Qods Asharif as its capital, the first Qibla, the Third Sacred Mosque, and the stop of our Prophet may Allah bless him and grant him salvation, on his way to the Heavens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Al-Aqsa, which is desecrated by the occupation army and the hordes of settlers, needs your resources and support for the dignity of the Arab Islamic Nation. Today, our brave prisoners in Israeli jails are waging the struggle of occupation with empty stomachs. Thirty days have elapsed since they started a hunger strike for dignity and pride, for minimum humanitarian claims stated in the 4th Geneva Convention and the provisions of international law.

These prisoners need your support until they are freed once and for all. As our saying goes: “strengthening the prisoner’s steadfastness is not normalization with the wardens.”

Mr. President,

The birds born in cages believe that flying is forbidden, but our people believe that flying to freedom is a must.

With you and thanks to you we will break the cage.

AssalamuAlaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu,